

# NATION SHOCKED BY CRIME AT HILLSVILLE

## Entire Human Fabric of the Court Wiped Out by Allen Outlaws, Who Murdered Judge and Others to Save Old Floyd From Prison.

Both Floyd Allen and his younger son, Claude Swanson Allen, were convicted specifically of the same crime—the murder of William M. Foster, attorney for the Commonwealth in the County of Carroll. Since much direct evidence connecting the death of Mr. Foster with the bullets fired by these prisoners was lacking, the trial jury evidently took into account the theory of conspiracy as advanced by the prosecution together with the entire crime and the bearing each man's death had upon the motives of the murderers.

Not only the State and the country, but the civilized world, were shocked when the news came from the little town of Hillsville, in the Virginia mountains, on the morning of March 14, 1912, that the officers of the law in Carroll County had been killed in the discharge of their duties. But little of the ill feeling there, and of the dominance of the Allens over the affairs of the county, including the administration of justice, had been known outside of the immediate section of the State surrounding Carroll.

One thing, however, was significant. When Judge Robert C. Jackson, now practicing attorney in Roanoke, and former judge of the circuit of which Carroll is a part, was told by a reporter that the court at Hillsville had been shot up and the officers killed, he exclaimed: "The Allens! Judge Jackson is known to have felt that the action of Governor Montague in 1902 in remitting a jail sentence imposed on Floyd Allen alone saved him from the fate afterwards suffered by Judge Massie."

**Inception of the Crime.**  
Floyd Allen was placed on trial in the Circuit Court of Carroll County on March 15, 1912, on an indictment charging him with interfering with an officer in the discharge of his duty. The specific offense was that he interfered with two deputy sheriffs who were engaged in taking Sidna and Wesley Edwards, Floyd Allen's nephews, to jail at Hillsville to answer charges of fighting and disturbing public worship.

For many years Floyd Allen's domineering nature was a factor in all the affairs of his county. No doubt, the courts were somewhat to blame for not maintaining sterner discipline in the county and thus curbing the disposition of the Allen family to take the law in their own hands. In the final argument before Governor Mann on February 1, Judge D. W. Bolen said that Floyd Allen was a man who tried to enforce his own decrees. He brooked no opposition to his desires, and had fights and shooting affairs innumerable. One of the latter was a shooting affair with his own nephew, Jasper Allen, in which both were severely wounded. This caused an estrangement which had been bridged over only within the past few years.

**Floyd Whips Deputy.**  
It seems that the deputy sheriffs had one of the Edwards boys handcuffed and the other tied with a rope, as the officers had but one pair of handcuffs. An altercation between them and Floyd Allen resulted in the deputy receiving a sound whipping, and the officer making a clean escape. The officer who had taken his medicine declined to take further action, and Floyd Allen himself later took them to Hillsville and bailed them. They were convicted and served jail sentences for the offense.

From term to term, Floyd Allen's case was continued, until he was placed on trial in March. He was prosecuted by Commonwealth's Attorney Foster and defended by Judge Bolen and Walter S. Tipton. The evidence was soon in, and the case was argued and given to the jury. The arraignment of the prisoner by the prosecuting attorney was regarded as rather vigorous.

Late in the afternoon of March 14 the jury returned that it had not agreed upon a verdict, whereupon it was adjourned to the next morning. Floyd Allen spent the night with his brother, Sidna Allen, seven miles south of Hillsville, instead of going to his own home, which is ten miles away on the southern slope of the Blue Ridge. He wore, Victor and Claude,

with his nephews, Sidna and Wesley Edwards and Friel Allen, the latter a son of Jasper or Jack Allen, spent the night at Hillsville.

Early the following morning the Allens went to the courthouse. It was in evidence, though denied, that Floyd Allen, when asked if he desired his horse cared for in a stable, replied that he "did not have long to stay." This reply was sent to the room, and the court, with Judge Thornton L. Massie on the bench, took up other business.

# DYING STATEMENTS BY BOTH PRISONERS

## Floyd Allen Repeats Evidence at Trial, While Claude Reasserts Innocence of Conspiracy—Says Shooting Was So Sudden He Had No Time to Think.

Both Floyd and Claude Swanson Allen left ante-mortem statements to the public in which they reassert their innocence of the conspiracy to shoot up the court at Hillsville. Floyd Allen's paper is lengthy and is a thorough repetition of his testimony at the various trials, already printed many times, with the addition of his personal comments on some of his own statements and on those of his brother, Claude, and his enemies. He maintains that he was in the right in the various disturbances in which he has been engaged, and expresses sorrow for the pass to which he has brought his son.

The various threats attributed to Floyd Allen by many witnesses are denied by him. He concludes with forgiveness for everybody.

**Statement From Claude.**  
Claude Allen's statement is shorter. With the exception of thanks to those who tried to secure commutation of sentence for him, and criticism of three ministers who have recently said the Allens should die, it contains nothing new.

**Death Chamber.**  
Virginia State Prison, March 27, 1913.  
As I am now condemned to die, and realize all hope is gone, I would like my duty to tell what I know of the trouble for which I have been tried and for which I must pay my life. Before being further tried I will give a few things of my past life.

I was born June 11, 1883, and from my earliest recollection and until the present time, I have lived a truthful and honest life. I have tried to do my duty to God and man, and to live a life of honor and integrity. I have never been in any way connected with the conspiracy to shoot up the court at Hillsville.

**Did Not Expect Verdict.**  
I was never in any way connected with the conspiracy to shoot up the court at Hillsville. I was never in any way connected with the conspiracy to shoot up the court at Hillsville.

**Denies Conspiracy.**  
I have been accused of conspiring with Claude Allen to shoot up the court at Hillsville and other things which I am not guilty of. I had too much love and respect for my dear mother and father to be a part of such a conspiracy.

**Thanks Friends.**  
I wish to thank all who have tried to help me in my time of trouble. I am sure that God will be merciful to me and that I will be able to live a life of honor and integrity.

**Good for the Eyes.**  
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**STATION CROWDS GREET GOVERNOR**  
Police Ordered to Elba to Prevent Demonstration in Behalf of Allen Outlaws.

**DETECTIVES AT CAPITOL**  
Statement Promptly Issued to Major Wood to Proceed With Execution.

**Major Wood's Authority.**  
Speculates on the conduct of Major James E. Wood, in putting off the execution, with the only result of adding to the agony of everybody, seem to have been based on a misconception.

**Why They Urged Mercy for Both**  
Branch and Wingfield Called on Governor to Save Men Condemned to Death.

**Following is the petition sent to Governor Mann on Thursday by John Branch and J. H. Wingfield, a member of the State Corporation Commission, urging clemency in behalf of Floyd and Claude Swanson Allen:**

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